

# Washington Park Reservoir Improvements Project Community Sounding Board Meeting #1 Summary

July 16, 2013 5:30 to 8:00 pm First United Methodist Church 1838 SW Jefferson - Room 202

## **CSB Members Present**

Eric Nagle – Arlington Heights NA Charlie Clark – Northwest Heights NA Dave Malcolm – Sylvan-Highlands NA Bill Welch – Northwest District Association Terri Davis – Portland Parks & Recreation

#### **CSB Members Absent**

Nicolas Clark – Neighbors West Northwest Chris Kent – Goose Hollow NA Patty Gardner – Pearl District NA Annie Mahoney – Historic Group Representative

#### **Staff & Public Present**

Teresa Elliott, Portland Water Bureau
Tim Hall, Portland Water Bureau
Tom Carter, Portland Water Bureau
Marie Del Toro, Portland Water Bureau
Alan Peck, AECOM
Carmen Nale, AECOM
Marilee Hanks, AECOM
Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement
Sam Beresky, JLA Public Involvement
Jamie Harvie, JLA Public Involvement
Paul Klein, MWE Architects
Chad Sanderson, MWE Architects
Brooke Webster, Neighbors West Northwest Board

# Welcome and Introductions

**Teresa Elliott** welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said the purpose of the Community Sounding Board (CSB) is to get input on how the final site will look. She reviewed what the project will entail, including burying Reservoir 3 and converting Reservoir 4 into an overflow and stormwater facility with de-chlorination services, but noted that the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) has just started the design process and specific plans have not yet been laid out. PWB met with designers last month to talk about what information the designers need. She noted that the public involvement and permitting process is driving the schedule rather than the design.

Jeanne Lawson reviewed the agenda.

CSB members, as well as staff and members of the public introduced themselves.

# Questions and Discussion

- **Dave Malcolm** noted that he attends as an individual, rather than as a representative of community opinion. **Jeanne Lawson** replied that this is the case with all CSB members and there will not be time for members to attend neighborhood association (NA) meetings in between each CSB meeting. Rather, members serve as a sounding board of individuals who are familiar with the issues in their area.
- Charlie Clark asked whether the group will discuss how the project will affect the surrounding area, and also inquired about coordination with development in the Tualatin Valley Water District. Jeanne Lawson replied that the provision of the CSB is how the Washington Park Reservoirs area will be used, but the group is also a conduit for other pieces of information. She said that the project team will report back on TVWD coordination in the next meeting.
- Charlie Clark asked what point is Mt Tabor in their process. Tim Hall replied that the
  Mayor has dedicated money for a public process that will be run through the Mayor's office.
  Reservoirs will be decommissioned and Tabor readjustment construction is under design
  right now. Powell Butte and Kelly Butte have gone through a thorough process and are
  under construction.

# **Sounding Board Purpose and Protocols**

**Jeanne Lawson** reviewed the contents of the meeting packet, including the meeting agenda, contact list, draft protocols document, and copy of the PowerPoint presentation. She reviewed the purpose and role of the CSB. She noted that there is continuing opposition to burying the reservoir. The current process does not disregard that, but assumes that they will be buried and carries on from there.

Jeanne asked everyone to take a moment to review the protocol document and ask any questions. She then went through the operating protocols and asked for questions. No one had questions or comments.

Jeanne noted that due to tight timeframes, the group will meet frequently. Due to this schedule, there is no requirement to come to consensus, though the group may decide to do so. She reviewed how the group may choose to provide advice. She noted that any individual opinions expressed will be captured in meeting notes. The group decided to make one change to the protocols, which was to require a 2/3 majority of members present to revisit any decision reached by the group.

Jeanne discussed alternates and asked for alternates to be identified prior to the following meeting so they may be included in project communications. **Teresa Elliott** asked for alternates to be listed on the contact list at each meeting.

# Questions and Discussion

- **Dave Malcolm** noted that he may not be the Sylvan representative; someone else could join later.
- **Eric Nagle** said that Portland Parks and Recreation (PPR) should have a joint decision-making role with PWB in this project. **Teresa Elliott** replied that the reservoirs are on PWB property, though PWB is liaising with PPR, and PPR will have input on the design. She said that PPR's role is still being developed. **Terri Davis** said she is new to this project, and PPR

- are meeting with PWB tomorrow morning. **Jeanne Lawson** said they will continue to report on coordination with PPR at future meetings.
- **Dave Malcolm** asked whether the reservoir property will always be maintained as PWB property? **Teresa Elliott** replied that it would.
- **Dave Malcolm** noted that three meetings are scheduled in August, a time when many people are away. **Jeanne Lawson** said that project should have started six months ago but there were delays; the project now needs to proceed within the original deadlines. It is unfortunate that the design schedule (and thus meeting schedule) has been compressed. **Teresa Elliott** suggested revisiting the schedule for these meetings.
- The group discussed meeting times and agreed that Tuesdays are good days for meetings, with Wednesday as a backup. 5:30 p.m. is a good time. Meeting dates will be sent out to members as invitations so they can RSVP.

# **Project Overview and Context**

**Jeanne Lawson** reviewed the project's decision-making process. Due to the size and nature of the project, the City Council is the final decision-making body, though the Landmarks Commission will be very influential. **Teresa Elliott** explained that the Landmarks Commission is City-appointed body of knowledgeable community members.

**Jeanne Lawson** said the CSB's input will be forwarded to City Council along with the Landmarks Commission's input. PWB engineering input will also be sent; PWB has a legal obligation to say the reservoirs are safe prior to the City Council going ahead.

**Marilee Hanks** presented the overall context of the project, drivers, elements, and how the CSB's meetings fit within the process (see accompanying PowerPoint presentation document):

### Context

The reservoirs are an important part of the overall Bull Run watershed system. Water comes from Bull Run watershed; most of this is rainfall. System conceived in late 1800s. Water is constantly flowing in the system. The watershed is protected (from human access, fires and other things). The elevation change allows the whole system to be gravity-fed, even to the tap. Washington Park Reservoirs are the end of the gravity-fed line as well as one of only three tanks at this elevation (others Mayfair and Sam Jackson, though these are much smaller). The elevation of the Washington Park Reservoirs allows them to gravity feed the Portland-area west of the Willamette (i.e. everything below their elevation). Gravity-fed systems do not require electricity and are important for future sustainability.

PPR has more than 10000 acres of parkland; Washington Park is a gem in this system and provides many amenities. It borders downtown Portland and neighborhoods to the west. Washington Park is connected to Forest Park and together they provides large areas of habitat.

The reservoirs sit on PWB land within Washington Park. Features include the grand staircase, weir building, gatehouses, dams, pump house and chlorination building. The Reservoirs Historic Area more or less follows the fence line around the reservoirs.

#### **Drivers**

• Landslide – There is an active, ancient landslide in the area, perhaps exacerbated by reservoir construction. This is a major project driver. PWB monitors the landslide and de-

- waters it to slow movement. This project will accommodate landslide by allowing the reservoirs to move with it. The project will not stop the landslide; it is too large.
- Aging infrastructure The reservoirs were planned for 100-year life span and are currently more than 125 years old. There has been some work on them, but updates are needed.
- Seismic susceptibility Going by historic data, the project area is due for a major earthquake. Current reservoirs are not designed to withstand earthquakes.
- Provide safe drinking water for Portland This is always the PWB's most important driver.

#### Elements

There will be changes to the reservoirs; what these changes will be has not yet been determined and is part of the input of the CSB.

- Water Visible water may shrink in some areas.
- Vegetation There will be changes to vegetation, particularly trees. There was much less vegetation when the reservoirs were built because the area had been logged. It is likely that new vegetation will include more native species and fewer invasives.
- Access Currently, access around Reservoir 3 is controlled (able to be open or closed to public depending on security needs) and Reservoir 4 is closed to public access. This project provides an opportunity to allow access to Reservoir 4.
- Activities Opportunity for a variety of activities within the project area. As Reservoir 3 shrinks, there is opportunity for more green space.
- Character In some ways their distinct character will be maintained, however some ways it will shift.

#### **Process**

The project schedule shows CSB meetings, Landmarks Commission meetings, open houses and community outreach events. Virtual open houses will be held in conjunction with open houses, and the project team will do outreach for about two weeks prior to those events. The intent is to complete the design phase by end of the year.

The project team is interested in presenting at NA meetings upon request.

#### **Ouestions** and **Discussion**

- **Teresa Elliott** noted that PPR should be included in the project team in the decision-making graphic. The graphic will be updated to reflect this.
- **Charlie Clark** noted that if Reservoir 4 is taken offline, PWB is cutting capacity. **Teresa Elliott** replied that Reservoir 4 will maintain a similar function, however it is true that PWB's capacity in Washington Park and the west side will be reduced. PWB believes they can continue to meet capacity requirements, though are maintaining ownership of reservoirs as a mitigation.
- **Brooke Webster** asked whether capacity needs will change due to climate change? **Teresa Elliott** replied that PWB works with climatologists to project what needs will be.
- **Bill Welch** said the Bull Run area was logged during the 1970s and asked whether there has been replanting since then. The project team will provide an answer at the next meeting.
- **Eric Nagle** requested summaries from the open houses. **Jeanne Lawson** replied that these will be provided.
- **Bill Welch** said that changes to historic structures are required to go through the Landmark Commission. There was general discussion about the role of Landmarks Commission and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and requirements when historic structures are changed.

- **Bill Welch** asked whether CSB members should attend Landmarks Commission meetings to get context? **Tom Carter** said that members are welcome to come, though the first meeting is simply a briefing.
- **Bill Welch** asked whether the project team is consulting with Landmarks Commission staff, as well as presenting to Board members. **Tom Carter** said that they are doing both.

# Stakeholder Issues and Values

**Jeanne Lawson** summarized the issues and opportunities that the project team has identified to date through stakeholder discussions. She led the CSB members in an exercise to identify important values to consider when weighing project options. The project team will consider these values when developing goals and objectives.

Values exercise summary

## Park master plan

- A master plan is needed
- Changes to reservoirs should be coordinated with the plan

## Visitor experience

- Should be people-friendly but not a major crowd attractor
- Public Access
  - o Should improve and not inhibit transportation through the park
  - Not just ADA
  - No new skateboard attractions
- Added community value
  - Cultural continuity
  - o Open up the views to reservoirs; plan for multiple view corridors

# Security

• Keep area locked at night

Seismic and landslide considerations

# Sustainable and cooperative maintenance

- Cost-efficiency is a major concern
- Joint responsibility PWB and PPR?

# Process transparency / full disclosure

• Accountability of PWB and City Council

# Preservation of historic elements

- Protect existing aesthetic in natural and built landscapes
- Provide historic context (e.g. interpretive signage)

# Vegetation

- Remove and prevent invasive species
- Support healthy urban canopy
- Plan for climate change native species and xeriscaping

# Construction and impacts to water

- Consider both the availability and quality of water
- Water supply should be uninterrupted during construction
- Minimize construction impacts to surrounding areas
- Review and confirm existing contracts (e.g. TVWD)

Some design ideas emerged during the exercise:

- Reflecting pool
- Wading pool
- Fountains or cascades
- Light fixtures should be historically appropriate

# Questions and Discussion

- **Jeanne Lawson** said stakeholders have raised questions about eliminating water's exposure to sun by covering open reservoirs. **Teresa Elliott** said water is boosted with chlorine at open reservoirs because sun breaks down chlorine; covering them will eliminate the need for chlorine boosting. Also, keeping water underground ensures more consistent movement and even distribution throughout the system.
- **Bill Welch** said his neighborhood association is trying to get Tier 4 emissions requirements for construction within the neighborhood.
- There was general discussion about skateboarding; **Teresa Elliott** said that PWB would prefer to deter all skateboarding because it could damage historic structures.
- **Bill Welch** said he is concerned about the landslide, and the safety of changes with construction. **Teresa Elliott** replied they cannot prevent the landslide, but reservoir updates can be designed to prevent both damage to and damage from the landslide.
- **Dave Malcolm** said there could be a Washington Park Master Plan in the next five years. **Terri Davis** said PPR is trying to raise funds to do a planning process within five years.

# Closing

**Jeanne Lawson** reminded the group of the coming open house and virtual open house, and that invitations to the next CSB meeting would be coming soon.

**Open House:** July 25, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Collins Hall – First United Methodist Church

**Next Meeting:** August 6, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Room 202 - First United Methodist Church